

ITEM: 14

SUBJECT: Sacramento River Watershed Program Monitoring

BOARD ACTION: *Information Item*

BACKGROUND: Founded in 1996, the Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the Sacramento River Watershed and promoting watershed stewardship throughout the watershed. The SRWP is a consensus-based organization supporting teams of stakeholders in developing collaborative approaches to address watershed issues and conduct public outreach.

A major effort that the SRWP has supported is a water monitoring program in the watershed. The SRWP monitoring program was started because there was no ongoing monitoring program for the Sacramento River Watershed and there was a need to better understand water quality in the watershed. The SRWP began monitoring the Sacramento River and its major tributaries in 1998. Since then, the program has been tracking various contaminants and aquatic life to establish the condition of the river and water-quality trends. This \$5+ million effort was made possible through grant funding from the US EPA, matching funds from the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District, and a more recent CALFED Watershed Program Proposition 50 grant administered by the State and Regional Water Board. Additionally, the SRWP coordinates its monitoring with other agencies and organizations conducting monitoring in the watershed to avoid redundancy and leverage limited funding.

The SRWP released its first comprehensive watershed monitoring report in December 2006, which available on the Internet at http://www.sacrriver.org/subcommittees/monitoring/documents/SRWP_Monitoring_Summary_200612.pdf. The report evaluates water quality conditions in the Sacramento River Watershed by measuring and tracking the levels of various contaminants over a six year period. Findings are presented in the report in terms of the major uses and activities that are or are perceived to be threatened in the Sacramento River Watershed—drinking water, recreation, fishing and aquatic life. The report found that overall water quality conditions in the Sacramento River Watershed are good though there are specific water quality concerns including mercury contamination and occasional aquatic toxicity in its tributaries.

Funding for the SRWP monitoring program ends in late 2007. Many stakeholders and government agencies want the regional monitoring that the SRWP has been doing to continue. The SRWP is exploring with the Regional Board and other

stakeholders how to continue a coordinated monitoring program in the Sacramento River Watershed beyond 2007.

RECOMMENDATION:

NA

Mgmt. Review_____

Legal Review_____

15/16 March 2007

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